

receiving, from the user, user information which includes a product used by the user and a requested information type from the user;

storing the product information about a product and additional product information about products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product and the user information which includes a product user by the user and the requested information type from the user, all in a database, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user;

distributing the additional product information to a user automatically corresponding to the additional products that can be used with the product used by the user and which match the user's requested information type; and

distributing the user information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

REMARKS

In the final Office Action mailed May 29, 2002 the Examiner noted that claims 1-8 and 10-20 were pending, and rejected all claims. Claims 1, 10-16, 18 and 19 have been amended and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 1-8 and 10-20 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

In the above-noted final Office Action the Examiner rejected all claims as anticipated by Todd.

A response was filed to the above-noted final Office Action and the Examiner responded with an Advisory Action of 10/21/2 alleging that other vendors inherently get access to product data of other vendors via database access, referring to Todd at cols. 6-11.

Todd is directed at a system for detecting and avoiding faults by, from time to time, sending configuration information to a remote system capable of identifying inherent conflicts in software and hardware.

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This is in contrast to the present invention which is designed to allow a software product user to receive product information pertinent to the software (say, a first product by a first vendor) they are using. This is to allow the user to be made aware of software (say, a second product) that may be of interest to or helpful to them with respect to the software (the first product) they are using. The present invention tracks the usage of the software (the first product) as part of this effort. In this situation a vendor (say, a second vendor) other than the vendor of the software (the first product) being used is notified concerning the usage. In particular vendors (second vendors) that have other products (the second product) that they are selling that may be of interest to the user are notified of the usage. These features are emphasized in the independent claims.

It is submitted that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Todd and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

It is submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND the following claims:

1. (SEVEN TIMES AMENDED) A computer implemented management system, which manages registration of computer-related products, including hardware and software products, comprising:

a user information general management means, generally managing user registration information, about users of hardware and software products, and using status information thereof transmitted from the user; and

a user registration/reference means that interfaces with the users notifying said user information general management means of the user registration information and the using status information at a request of the user and the using status information,

wherein the user registration information comprises personal information about each user containing an identification number of each user and registration information containing a type of information which is requested by the users with regard to the computer-related products, said type of information can include information about products which can be used in combination with products that are used by the users and available from a plurality of vendors, and said type of information further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user, and

new information about the computer-related products from a vendor side of the computer-related products is extracted, depending on information extraction condition containing a requested information type in the registration information, and is transmitted to said user registration/reference means from said user information general management means to provide the new information, and

the user registration information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, is transmitted from the user information general management means to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

10. (SIX TIMES AMENDED) A management apparatus which manages user information about a computer-related product used by a user terminal connected through a network, comprising:

a user information general management means for managing using status information and a requested information type provided by the user terminal about a product used by a user;

a product information management means for managing product information provided by a vendor of the computer-related product including product information about additional products that can be used with a particular product; and

a product information notification means for referring to a product used by each user managed by said user information general management means and for providing product information managed by said product information management means about a product used by a user which corresponds to the products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user and match the user's requested information type, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user, and

the using status information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, is transmitted to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor from the user information general management means to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor, the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

11. (SIX TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with software to cause a computer to perform the actions of:

managing using status information and a requested information type provided by a user terminal about a product used by a user;

managing product information provided by a computer-related product vendor including product information about additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with a particular product, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user;

referring to the using status information and providing product information about additional products that can be used with the product used by a user and which corresponds to the requested information type at a product information request from the user terminal; and

transmitting the using status information, comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

12. (SIX TIMES AMENDED) A user terminal apparatus comprising:

a user information notification means for notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information including a product used by a user and a requested information type about the computer-related product; and

a product information reference means for requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product which corresponds to the requested information type from a computer-related product vendor and information on additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user, and said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user,

a using status transmitting means transmitting the using status information, comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

13. (SEVEN TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with software for causing a computer to perform the actions of:

notifying an external unit of user registration information and using status information including a product used by a user and a requested information type about a computer-related product used by a user; and

requesting an external unit for new information about the computer-related product which corresponds to the requested information type from a vendor of the computer-related product and information on additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user, and said requested information type further signifies a difference in.

vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user,

transmitting the using status information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

14. (EIGHT TIMES AMENDED) A vendor terminal apparatus comprising:

a user information reference means for obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information including a requested information type and using status information including a product used by the user transmitted from a user of a computer-related product; and

a product information notification means for notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product, if the new information about the computer-related product corresponds to the requested information type, the new information including additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user, and said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user,

a using status information receiving means receiving the using status information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user,

wherein, the vendor terminal apparatus can use the user registration information from a user of a product of a different vendor rather than the vendor itself with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

15. (EIGHT TIMES AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with software to cause a computer to perform the actions of:

obtaining, from an external unit, user registration information including a requested information type, and using status information including a product used by a user, transmitted from the user of a computer-related product;

notifying an external unit of new information about the computer-related product, if the new information about the computer-related product corresponds to the requested information type, the new information including additional products available from a plurality of vendors that

can be used with the product used by the user, and said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user; and

receiving the using status information, comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user,

wherein, the computer-readable storage medium is used by a computer that can use the user registration information from a user of a product of a different vendor rather than the vendor itself with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

16. (FIVE TIMES AMENDED) A computer implemented management system, which manages registration of computer-related products, comprising:

a user information general management module generally managing user registration information including a requested information type, and using status information including a product used by a user, transmitted from a user of the computer-related product; and

a user registration/reference module that interfaces with a user of the computer-related products notifying said user information general management module of the user registration information and the using status information and information about additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user at a request of the user who uses a computer-related product related to the user registration information and the using status information and which corresponds to the requested information type, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user,

a using status information module transmitting the using status information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

18. (FIVE TIMES AMENDED) A user registration center managing and distributing information provided by both a user and a vendor comprising:

a database receiving, from the vendor product information about a product and additional product information about additional products that can be used with the product;

the database receiving, from the user, user information which includes a product used by the user and a requested information type from the user; and

a distributing module, automatically distributing to the user, additional product information corresponding to the additional products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product used by the user and which match the user's requested information type, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user,

a using status information module transmitting the user information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.

19. (FIVE TIMES AMENDED) A method of managing and distributing information provided by both a user and a vendor comprising:

receiving, from the vendor, product information about a product and additional product information about additional products that can be used with the product;

receiving, from the user, user information which includes a product used by the user and a requested information type from the user;

storing the product information about a product and additional product information about products available from a plurality of vendors that can be used with the product and the user information which includes a product user by the user and the requested information type from the user, all in a database, wherein said requested information type further signifies a difference in vendor of said products that can be used in combination with products that are used by the user, in terms of whether the vendor is the same or not with the vendor of the products that are used by the user;

distributing the additional product information to a user automatically corresponding to the additional products that can be used with the product used by the user and which match the user's requested information type; and

distributing the user information, also comprising a number of times a particular software product is used by the user, to a different vendor other than the software product's vendor with

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the different vendor selling products that may be of interest to users of the particular software product.